

ELEMENT 171: RHODE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

01 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 23-19 (6) of the General Laws, the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, the Department of Environmental Management, and the State Planning Council are to cooperate in the preparation of a comprehensive solid waste management plan. The plan was adopted by the State Planning Council, as Element 171 of the State Guide Plan, on November 14, 1996.

The purposes of the plan are to:

- identify the needs caused by specific wastes and develop waste-specific management programs, on a waste-by-waste basis;
- protect those natural resources affected by solid waste management activities;
- maximize the utilization of resources recovered from the solid waste stream; and,
- in general to provide guidance for the environmentally sound management and disposal of solid waste in Rhode Island based on an integrated, statewide, comprehensive management plan.

02 ISSUES ADDRESSED

Element 171 addresses the following issues:

- Source reduction
- Recycling
- Landfilling
- Managing special wastes
- Financing costs of the system

03 GOAL

The goal of Element 171 is:

Environmentally sound management of solid waste that protects and preserves the environment and public resources and promotes the convenience, health, comfort, safety, and welfare of the people of the state at reasonable cost including, in order of preference, source reduction, source preparation and recycling, processing, and disposal.

The objectives are as follows:

- Objective 1: Provide for necessary and reliable solid waste management facilities and programs.
- Objective 2: Reduce the amount of solid waste generated.
- Objective 3: Maximize recovery of post consumer materials that can be reused in the manufacture of new products.
- Objective 4: Maximize the recovery and reuse of materials from wastes where generation cannot be reduced.
- Objective 5: Provide maximum protection of human health and the environment.
- Objective 6: Achieve and maintain reasonable costs.
- Objective 7: Provide opportunity for public and inter-agency review in order to maximize the potential of including innovative policies and technologies and to maximize public support.

04 RECOMMENDATIONS

The plan develops recommendations for the development and implementation of facilities or programs and provides decision-making process guidance for future decisions. The recommendations are summarized as follows:

- Expand recycling processing capacity through expansion of the existing materials recovery facility.
- Increase the number and type of materials that are extracted from the waste stream with a view toward maximizing recycling to the extent economically, technologically and environmentally feasible and practicable, as determined under existing statutes and regulations.
- Proceed as rapidly with the licensure of the Southwest Landfill.
- Perform a cost-benefit analysis of constructing a facility at the State Landfill to remove recyclables from the commercial waste stream.
- Analyze the economic impacts of, and do a market analysis before proceeding with a construction and demolition debris processing facility.
- Analyze the economic impacts, need, impacts on other programs, particularly recycling and reliability of technology before proceeding with a municipal solid waste composting facility.

- Analyze the need for, location, system economic impacts, impacts on other programs, particularly recycling, and technology reliability before undertaking other management options or proceeding with new management facilities.
- Develop a stable, long-term funding mechanism for the Corporation so the Corporation and its customers can reliably project what the tipping fees will be over the mid-term and so the Corporation can more accurately plan for and develop infrastructure.
- Support the expeditious establishment of weight-or volume-based user fee systems and provide assistance to communities who seek to establish such user fee systems.
- Develop a more equitable rate structure which reduces the discrepancy between municipal and commercial tipping fees.
- The costs of solid waste management should be paid by the actual generators through the implementation of a user-fee system.